



Government Records Bulletin

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Records disposition involves the planning of the life cycle of all records, the preservation of archival records and the destruction of those records that have outlived their usefulness. These are all concerns of anyone attempting to manage information as a corporate resource.



■ A New Approach to Disposition

On November 30, 1990, the National Archivist wrote to deputy heads of federal departments and agencies, proposing to work with them in planning the systematic disposition of their records.

Despite the quantity of archival records preserved to date, gaps remain in the records of government. It is also necessary to consider the cost to government of storing now-worthless records — records that cannot be destroyed without the Archivist's authorization.

Dr. Wallot proposed to phase in the new approach over a five-year period. The Archives would contact a number of departments and agencies each year to develop a records disposition plan.

This plan will cover the sequence in which an institution's programs will be reviewed and the manner in which they will be approached, and it will set out a time frame for the preparation and review of disposition submissions.

National Archivist Jean-Pierre Wallot, with Ralph Westington (left), the Director of Disposition and Evaluation, and Eldon Frost (right), the Director of Government Archives Division. Westington, Frost and their staffs are working with Archives' clients to put the new approach to records disposition into practice. The three are examining an optical disc on which electronic records from the Trade Negotiations Office were transferred to the Archives.

A submission would normally cover all records of a branch, sector or directorate. The information required in a submission will be limited to the minimum needed by the National Archivist to identify the records as archival or historic, or to consent to their destruction.

Deputy heads responded positively to the National Archivist's proposal. Recognition of the importance of corporate memory, support for a planned approach, and general agreement with the suggested timing characterized replies. ■

■ Basis in Legislation

The *National Archives of Canada Act* was proclaimed on June 11, 1987. The evolution of disposition practices within

the federal government had formerly been supported by the Public Records Order (P.C. 1966-1749) and, more recently, by Treasury Board policy. The Act provides a strong legislative foundation for the mandate of the National Archives concerning the disposition of institutional and ministerial records.

The overall mandate of the National Archives is stated in Subsection 4(1) of the Act. As a cultural institution, the Archives acquires and preserves records of national significance. "Record" is defined as it is in the *Access to Information Act* and encompasses all documentary material regardless of physical form or characteristics.

Subsection 5(1) of the Act specifies that no record under the control of a government institution and no ministerial record shall be destroyed or disposed of without the consent of the

National Archivist. Subsections 5(2) and 5(3) provide for direct examination of records for which the Archivist has received a disposition request.

Subsection 6(1) states that the records of a government institution and ministerial records that, in the opinion of the Archivist, are of historic or archival importance are to be transferred to the care and control of the Archivist. The timing and conditions of the transfer are to be specified in schedules or agreements between the Archivist and the institution or person responsible for the records.

Ministerial records are a new category of record that documents the official business conducted by the minister as head of a government institution. These records are not, however, under the control of the institution. The inclusion of this category in the legislation was intended to ensure the transfer of this type of information to the National Archives. Previously, these records were regarded as a minister's personal papers and were donated to the Archives at the minister's discretion. ■

■ Historical Perspective

Early records retention and disposition practices were more concerned with effectiveness and economy than with the historical significance of records.

In December 1889, the Post Office Department developed the first federal records schedule when it approached Cabinet requesting a standard five-year retention period for certain routine financial documents. Cabinet approved the request, after adding several amendments based on British records disposition practices.

Over the next 50 years, a royal commission and Treasury Board reinforced the notion that government departments should obtain Treasury Board authorization before destroying records.

Meanwhile, Canada's first archives legislation (1912) permitted the Dominion Archivist* to acquire records by various means, but specified no requirement that the memory of govern-

ment be preserved, nor any process for carrying out such a mission.

One repercussion of World War II was a huge increase in the quantity of government records. At war's end, there was concern for the custody, transfer, and destruction of records of organizations that had ceased operations.

An interdepartmental Advisory Committee on Public Records, formed in 1944 at the request of the prime minister, recommended the creation of a permanent committee on public records that would report to Treasury Board. Established in September 1945, the Public Records Committee was chaired by the secretary of state. The Dominion Archivist served as vice-chairman.

The committee gradually made progress in coordinating and controlling the methods and procedural steps relating to the disposition of public records. Whereas the emphasis of earlier years had been placed mainly on the need to destroy records of no further operational use, submissions were now scrutinized to ensure the preservation of records of enduring value.

In 1956, a special committee of the Records Management Association developed a records schedule covering administrative topics which could be considered common to all departments and agencies. The resulting advisory guide (1957) led to the *General Records Disposal Schedules of the Government of Canada* (first edition 1963). The 1963 manual gave disposition authority for housekeeping records without further reference to the Public Records Committee.

The Royal Commission on Government Organization (Glassco, 1962) cast a critical eye on the paperwork produced by government. The commission endorsed a Public Records Committee finding in its report:

We therefore recommend that: the allocation of responsibility for public records and the establishment of rules for their disposal be governed by legislation.

While legislation was not immediately forthcoming, a first step was taken in

1966: the Public Records Order (P.C. 1966-1749) delineated the disposition-related responsibilities of departments, Treasury Board and the Public Archives of Canada. The Dominion Archivist now became the ultimate authority for approving records schedules submitted by federal government institutions. This authority was strengthened by the passage of the *National Archives of Canada Act* in 1987.

The importance of an effective records scheduling and disposition program has also been emphasized in recent years by the Records Management policy (1983), the *Privacy Act* (1983) and the Management of Government Information Holdings policy (1989).

The demands currently facing government in the area of records disposition are formidable, but not entirely new. A century ago, sound records management increased effectiveness and economy. In mid-century, increasing emphasis was placed on saving valuable records from destruction. Now, we are confronted with multiple media and relentless technological change. The Government-wide Disposition Plan ushers in a comprehensive response to these, our latest challenges. ■

*The 1987 Act changed Dominion Archivist to National Archivist and Public Archives of Canada to National Archives of Canada.

■ Disposition

The Archives uses *disposition* as an umbrella term for the three forms which the disposition of records takes in the federal government.

The first is *transfer for preservation*. Records of archival or historic value are given to the National Archives. Roughly five per cent of the records of federal departments and agencies end up in the Archives.

The second is *destruction*. Paper records of no further use to anybody eventually wind up in a recycling plant or in the city dump. In the case of electronic data, the records are often simply deleted.

The third form is *alienation*. Records sometimes pass out of the hands of the

federal government when responsibilities are transferred to provincial or territorial governments, or when an agency or program is privatized. ■

MGIH Supports New Approach

The Management of Government Information Holdings policy (MGIH) was issued by the Treasury Board Secretariat in August 1989. One of the policy's major thrusts is to identify and conserve information holdings that document policy and program decisions or have "historical or archival importance."

The policy calls for government institutions to organize their information in one or more structured classification systems that can be used to compile a single corporate inventory for managing information holdings. Institutions are also required to ensure that all information identified in the inventory is scheduled for retention and disposition.

Government institutions are accountable through their deputy heads for compliance with Treasury Board information policies. In accordance with the policy, each institution has designated a senior official who is responsible for the management of information holdings. This individual represents the deputy head to Treasury Board Secretariat and other central agencies concerned with the MGIH policy.

Disposition plans for individual government institutions are to be formulated by the information systems analysts and archivists of the National Archives

in cooperation with officials of the department or agency concerned. The plans are then to be signed off by the senior official responsible for coordination of the disposition function in the National Archives and the senior official responsible for management of information holdings in the institution. ■

Access to Information

Requests made under the *Access to Information Act* are handled by the institution that controls the information.

When information holdings are no longer of operational use to the controlling institution — in other words, when the retention period has expired — records considered to be of archival value are transferred to the National Archives.

Once information is transferred, it is the Archives that handles requests for access. The Treasury Board's *Interim Policy Guide: Access to Information Act and The Privacy Act*, however, may oblige the Archives to consult the institution which transferred the records before granting or denying access. This is frequently the case if national security or commercial confidentiality is a concern. The Archivist, nevertheless, has the final say in the matter.

A situation that causes some confusion arises when the retention period for certain records has expired, but the information has not been destroyed or transferred elsewhere. As the information still exists, the institution that controls it must handle any access request in the normal fashion. ■

Books

Books and other published material held by the federal government have important informational and cultural value to Canadians. As libraries acquire new publications, older and less relevant materials are disposed of.

Books of little value to one library, however, may be needed by another to fill a gap in its collection. Mindful of its role to preserve this valuable national asset, the National Library collects surplus books and other published materials.

Under the provisions of the *National Library Act*, all published materials surplus to the requirements of a department or agency must be placed in the care and custody of the National Librarian.

The Canadian Book Exchange Centre was established in 1973 to assist the National Librarian in the disposal of surplus materials and serve as a national clearinghouse for the exchange of library material. Detailed information about the procedures may be obtained from: Chief, Canadian Book Exchange Centre, National Library of Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N4. Tel: (613) 952-8904. ■

Completing the Life Cycle

Disposition is the final stage of the information life cycle. The life cycle applies to information in every form and medium. At its most simple, a three-phase birth-to-death progression consists of:

- creation or receipt of information;



- operational use and protection; and
- disposition.

An expanded description of the information life cycle could include six stages:

- Information enters an organization's control through internal creation, unplanned receipt, or search and collection.
- The information is organized or processed to enhance its accessibility.
- Information is disseminated (it may be repackaged for transmission).
- Search and retrieval results in information being provided to users. The goal is "the right information to the right person at the right time."
- Information is stored, protected, controlled and maintained. Distinguishing between active, semi-active, and dormant records improves efficiency and economy.
- Disposition takes place by destruction or by transfer to an archives.

The life cycle of information should not be confused with the "systems development life cycle" (which is a logical, seven-stage process used to develop a computer system). Rather, the two perspectives should be combined. After deciding what information is needed to fulfil its mission, an organization should take the requirements of the information life cycle into account during each phase of information systems development. ■

■ General Disposition Authorities

The *General Records Disposal Schedules of the Government of Canada (GRDS)* and the "Authority for the Destruction of Transitory Records" help institutions avoid unnecessary storage and retrieval costs without compromising corporate memory.

While operational records are unique, administrative records tend to be similar from institution to institution. Based on this distinction, the *GRDS*

eliminates the need to submit schedules before disposing of administrative records.

The *GRDS* contains five approved records retention and disposition schedules covering records related to general administration, buildings and properties, equipment and supplies, finance, and personnel. These schedules:

- serve as a standard for retention periods of administrative records;
- identify those that are archival and must be transferred to the Archives;
- identify those of possible archival value (requiring consultation with the Archives before they are disposed of);
- authorize institutions to dispose of the remaining administrative records on the expiry of their retention periods; and
- provide a model for classifying administrative information by subject.

Institutions which wish to keep administrative information longer than the *GRDS* states no longer require formal National Archives approval to do so—even for extensions beyond one year.

Institutions should, however, inform the Archives of the length of the extension and the reasons for it. This feedback will help the Archives make the next edition of the *GRDS* reflect operational requirements more accurately.

Note that this permission to extend retention periods does not apply to federal employee information. As the employer, Treasury Board sets mandatory retention periods to meet *Privacy Act* requirements and disposition must take place when the periods expire.

A single control point in an institution for copies of the *GRDS* will help ensure that employees have the most recent edition (1986), subsequent amendments (there have been two), and any departmental guidelines. The *GRDS* is available from Supply and Services Canada. Advice on applying the schedules is available from the National Archives.

A second instrument, the "Authority for the Destruction of Transitory Records," was approved by the National Archivist in December 1990. It states that:

Transitory records are those records that are required only for a limited time to ensure the completion of a routine action or the preparation of a subsequent record. Transitory records do not include records required by government institutions or Ministers to control, support, or document the delivery of programs, to carry out operations, to make decisions, or to account for activities of government.

The unpublished drafts of this article, for example, were transitory records. The working papers that contributed to the evolution of the *National Archives of Canada Act* are not transitory records.

The National Archivist approved the authority from a "historic and archival importance" perspective. Transitory records are simply not of great interest to a cultural institution.

Treasury Board and Justice, however, are concerned with the issue of transitory records from administrative and legal perspectives. Departments must be certain that these factors are also considered before records are destroyed.

The "Authority for the Destruction of Transitory Records" will be incorporated in the next edition of the *GRDS*. ■

■ Federal Records Centres

Government institutions have records that need not or should not be kept on-site. The National Archives provides secure and economical storage and disposition services in the eight Federal Records Centres (FRCs) located across Canada.

After setting definite retention periods for their records, institutions may store them at FRCs. The centres' information retrieval systems provide rapid access to these records when they are needed for reference.

When the retention periods expire, the centres transfer valuable records to the

Archives and destroy the rest. Paper, tape, film and electronic records are destroyed on-site. The centres even have facilities to destroy security-classified records according to prescribed procedures. The destruction facilities are also available for records that are not in the physical custody of an FRC — records that are brought in just to be destroyed.



The FRC destruction facilities recycled 5,500 tonnes of paper in 1990. These operations employ 90 workers who are developmentally challenged.

The National Archives has issued a revised and expanded *Federal Records Centres Users' Guide*. The *Guide* gives concise, comprehensive directions for preparing all types of information holdings (paper, microform or magnetic media) before shipping them to a Federal Records Centre.

Designed as a reference tool for operational staff, the *Guide* provides samples of the various forms used by the FRCs, shows how to label containers being shipped to the centres and provides instructions for retrieving information from an FRC. This publication is available free of charge from the National Archives. ■

■ Personnel Records

Established in 1957, the Personnel Records Centre (PRC) holds the records of former public servants — over 5.5 million of them.

But it does more than simply store and maintain these records. On behalf of the National Archivist, the PRC exercises the disposition-related responsibilities defined in Privacy legislation for the records under its control.

The *Privacy Act* (1983) and related regulations and policy require that personal information be retained for at least two years after it was last used to make a decision directly affecting an individual.

After someone leaves government service — whether military or civilian — the former employer keeps the records for one year. Then, consistent with the *National Archives of Canada Act* and MGIH policy, the records are transferred to the National Archives for another year or longer.

These records are primarily used to prove that individuals qualify for pensions, allowances and other benefits. Recently, departments needed thousands of records to calculate pay equity adjustments.

As many policies apply to former public servants, personnel records are generally retained until the former employee reaches 80 years of age. In the case of military personnel, most records are kept until the individual reaches 90.

Records in the PRC are ultimately disposed of according to the terms and conditions of disposition authorities approved by the National Archivist. Some of these records are then preserved by the Archives and the remainder are destroyed. ■

■ Archival Appraisals

Archivists specialize in the final phase of the information life cycle. After an institution has submitted a disposition proposal, the archivist appraises the

records, identifying those of archival value. But what can the information manager of that institution expect from an archival appraisal?

Archivists appraise institutional records using a specific set of criteria. Before even beginning an appraisal, archivists must have a thorough knowledge of the organization: its mandate, functions and use of records. In this way, archivists identify records for archival retention that best reflect the policies, programs and structure of the department or agency which created them.

Furthermore, archivists compare records under appraisal with the records of other directorates or branches within the same institution. Archivists also make sure the information is not held in other government institutions or in existing archival holdings. These steps prevent the costly retention of duplicate information.

Archivists must also have a broad knowledge of the informational value of institutional records. With this knowledge, archivists select records that will be useful to researchers inside and outside of government.

The volume of information being created, technical factors such as a record's medium, and financial factors such as preservation and storage costs influence appraisal decisions. The relatively few records selected for archival retention must be of enduring value.

Following their transfer to the National Archives, these records continue to be used. In fact, government officials conduct nearly half of the research done at the Archives. ■

■ Electronic Records

Nowadays program managers and archivists find themselves speaking the same language concerning electronic records: "We need proper documentation!"

Readers do not require special instructions to read the printed page. But in the machine-readable world, "how-to-read" instructions are always needed.

Proper documentation for an automated system identifies the system and its purpose and helps managers to upgrade the system, update information and solve computer-related problems. Documentation should include such things as the feasibility study, data dictionary, code books and record layout.

The National Archives requires the same documentation in order to ensure future access to electronic data of historical value. Future researchers — often from the institution where the information originated — may want to put old data to new uses. Data dictionaries and code books identify and explain the codes used to record data. Researchers may also want to know how the originating institution used the data. Feasibility studies will tell them why systems were needed and what they were meant to accomplish.

After determining that an electronic information holding should be preserved — and much data may simply be erased at the end of its retention period — Archives' personnel inspect the data to see if it can still be read, and determine whether the electronic data relates to information in other media. They ask for documentation — from the planning and start-up of a system to the present — and for related information on how the data was used.

In ideal circumstances, archival requirements for the retention and disposition of data are included in a system at the design stage. Consultations with technical experts at the National

Archives can help determine what those requirements are. Archival requirements could then be integrated with regular backup and update procedures. Subset and history files could also be created.

If electronic information systems are designed and managed well, preservation of historically valuable data will be relatively easy. If not, disposition planning with the Archives may identify weaknesses and contribute to solutions. ■

■ Training Opportunities

A competent staff is essential for preparing and carrying out a "planned approach" to the disposition of your records.

For this reason, the National Archives of Canada will train key departmental officials responsible for developing records disposition submissions.

But skilled people are also needed to carry out those plans, and our training program can help your staff develop the necessary skills.

Our 1991-1992 course calendar, *Managing Recorded Information*, lists eight records management courses and one workshop. Participants can learn everything from the fundamentals of records management to the use of computer technologies in the

management of recorded information. These courses also cover the information management legislation and policies of the Government of Canada.

Of particular interest to public servants implementing a planned approach to the disposition of records are two key courses: "Scheduling and Disposition" and "Retention Plans and Disposition Operations."

"Scheduling and Disposition" is a five-day course covering principles and techniques for developing and updating retention periods for records (regardless of storage media), and for implementing disposition authorities.

"Retention Plans and Disposition Operations" is a two-day regional course that, while reviewing techniques for setting retention periods, concentrates on applying disposition authorities. The course also teaches clients how to arrange for off-site storage at Federal Records Centres.

These courses support your organization in managing recorded information efficiently and effectively. And, down the road, the relative ease of collecting archival records from your well-managed information holdings will benefit the National Archives. ■

Published by the National Archives of Canada, the *Government Records Bulletin* brings trends and issues in the management of recorded information to the attention of senior federal government officials and their information management staff. To submit articles or receive the *Bulletin* write to: *Government Records Bulletin*, National Archives of Canada, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N3. Facsimile: (819) 953-5714

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« Conservation et disposition des documents », d'une durée de cinq cours, traite des principes et techniques de conservation et de la disposition des documents, et de la mise en œuvre d'un système de gestion documentaire. Ce cours est destiné aux étudiants en sciences de l'information et aux professionnels de la documentation et de l'information.

Deux cours sont particulièrement intéressants pour les fonctionnaires qui travaillent à la mise en œuvre d'une approche planifiée à la disposition des documents.

intitulé La gestion de l'information. Notez également le cours 1991-1992, intitulé Calendrier de cours 1991-1992, qui contient des informations détaillées sur la gestion de l'information. Ces cours sont offerts sur la gestion des documents et des méthodes pour résoudre les problèmes rencontrés. Les participants peuvent également apprendre des connaissances sur les méthodes et les principes fondamentaux de la gestion de l'information. Ces cours sont également destinés à aider les étudiants à développer leurs compétences en gestion de l'information.

Programme de formation

■ Les systèmes d'information électroniques sont bien conçus et bien utilisés, il sera facile de conserver les données de valeur historique. Sinon, nous devrons peut-être identifier les adresses et appartenir des solutions autorisées à l'élaboration des plans de dispositif. Si vous voulez bien préparer et bien apprendre l'« approche planifiée » à la disposition de vos documents, il vous aura duré un personnel compétent.

chefs — Souvent de l'institution ayant produit l'inspiration — Voudront peut-être utiliser d'anciennes données à des fins. Les dictonnaires de l'Académie sont souvent utilisés. Les codes de dommages et les répertoires de codes délimitent et expliquent les codes pratiques dans l'ergonomie. Les recherches sur l'ergonomie sont donc menées dans l'ergonomie. Des études de faisabilité leur expliqueront l'institution à l'issu de ces systèmes et ce qu'ils devaient réaliser.

Les AN ont besoin de la même documentation pour assurer l'accès futur aux données électroniques de valeur historique. Les futurs cher-

Une documentation adéquate doit identifier le système informatisé et son but, et doit aider les gestionnaires à améliorer le système, à mettre à jour l'information et à régler les problèmes reliés à l'information. Elle devrait comprendre une étude de faisabilité, un dictonnaire des données, des règles de codage et un cliché d'enregistrement.

Les gestionnaires de programmes et les archivistes sont sur la même ligne. Lorsqu'un fonds documentaire est questionné : tous les documents écrits sont sur la même ligne. Le lecteur n'a pas besoin de directives détaillées.

Les documents électroniques

Les archivistes doivent aussi bien connaître la valeur informative des documents instituionnels afin de pouvoir choisir des documents qui servent utiles aux chercheurs.

pas déjà conservée dans d'autres secteurs de la même institution. Ils assureront aussi que l'information n'est pas comparée à ceux d'autres objets d'une évaluation à ceux d'autres documents laissés.

Les archivistes sont des spécialistes de la gestion de l'information. Après une institution a soumis une demande de disposition à l'archiviste. Mais à quel le gestio- nnaire de l'information de cette institu- tion peut-il scatternre lors d'une évaluation archivistique?

Les évaluations archivistiques

conservé leurs dossiers pendant un an, ensuite, conformément à la loi sur les Archives nationales du Canada à la GRDG, ils sont transférés dans une autre année ou plus.

ors que les militaires ou les fonctionnaires fédéraux quittent l'emploi du gouvernement, l'ancien employeur

nest pas unidimensionnellement responsabilisé, mais il peut également être l'archiviste des documents. Au nom de l'acquitte, des responsabilités renseignementnels personnels

Établi en 1957, le Centre des documents du personnel (CDP) conserve les dossiers des anciens fonctionnaires fédéraux — plus de 5 millions.

Les documents du personnel

■ Congru pour servir d'ouvrage de référence au personnel d'exploitation, Guido offre des exemples des drivers formulaires utilisés par les CFD, explications commentées aux centres et conteneants destinés aux édificateurs et renseignement sur les marchés à suivre pour demander des documents consacrés dans un CFD.

des AN ont publié une version revue et augmentée du Guide de l'usager des centres fédéraux de documentation. Le guide offre des instructions concises et détaillées pour préparer des fonds de banques magnétiques (papier, microformes ou bandes magnétiques) avant de les envoyer à un CDI.

Après avoir déterminé des détails concernant les documents, les institutions peuvent les entreposer dans les CFD. Les systèmes de répertoire assurent un accès rapide aux documents.

Les installations de destruction des CFD ont recyclé 5 500 tonnes de papier en 1990. Ce service emploie 90 personnes ayant un handicap du développement.



Centres fédéraux de documents

Autorisations générales

Toutefois, les institutions devraient intégrer les AN de la durée et des motifs de la prolongation. Ces ressources permettent aux AN à rendre la prochaine édition des Plans plus conformes aux exigences opérationnelles.

Cette permission de prolonger des détails de conservation ne s'applique pas à l'information sur les fonctionnaires fédéraux. En tant qu'employeur, le CT fixe des détails de conservation obligatoires conformément aux exigences de la loi sur la protection des renseignements personnels, et la disposition doit avoir lieu quand les détails sont terminés.

Les institutions qui desservent des documents administratifs peuvent être classées en deux périodes : une période dans les Plans n°ont plus à prévoir pour des prolongations de plus d'un an.

- La description détaillée du cycle de vie de l'information pourrait comporter six étapes :
- L'information tombe sous le contrôle de l'informationnelle du cycle de vie de l'information avec le cycle de vie de l'information de systèmes »
- L'information est organisée ou traitée en vue d'en améliorer l'accessibilité.
- L'information est organisée (elle peut être regroupée à des fins de transmission).
- La recherche et le préparage permettent de fournir l'information aux utilisateurs. « Donner le bon renseignement à la bonne personne, au bon moment ».
- L'information est entreposée, protégée, contrôlée et maintenue. La distinction entre les documents actifs, semi-actifs et inactifs est l'efficacité et de l'économie.
- La disposition se fait par la destruction ou la transfert aux AN.
- La destruction peut être réalisée à des fins de recyclage et de destruction.



Le Centre canadien d'échange du livre a été fondé en 1973 pour aider le directeur général de la Bibliothèque nationale.

En vertu de la *Loi sur la Bibliothèque nationale*, toutes les publications numériques ou électroniques doivent être conservées dans les bibliothèques nationales, sauf sols et à la garde du directeur des institutions dont le but plus ou moins général de la Bibliothèque nationale.

Cependant, des livres de peu de valeur pour une bibliothèque peuvent toutefois occuper une grande place dans une bibliothèque nationale, la Bibliothèque grande ouverte à collection d'une autre.

Les livres et autres publications que détiennent le gouvernement fédéral ont une grande valeur sur le plan de l'information et de la culture pour les Canadiens. Or, à mesure qu'elles acquièrent de nouveaux ouvrages, les bibliothèques se départent de leurs anciennes collections et des usages.

Les livres

■ **Y a quelque chose de constructif lorsqu'e le détail de la conservation de certains documents est extrêmement mauvais que lorsque certains documents sont conservés de manière extrêmement bien.** ■

Après le transfert de l'information, les AN traitent les demandes d'accès à l'information. Mais, conformément à un document intitulé "Lignes directrices pour les organismes : Loi sur l'accès à l'information", les organismes doivent être tenus de consulter l'institution qui a transféré l'information pour déterminer si celle-ci doit être divulguée ou non. Les organismes doivent également tenir compte de l'importance de l'information et de la nécessité de la divulguer pour l'intérêt public. Les organismes doivent également tenir compte de l'importance de l'information et de la nécessité de la divulguer pour l'intérêt public.

Les demandes faites en vertu de la Loi sur l'accès à l'information sont traitées par l'institution qui a accès à l'information demandée. Lorsque les fonds de renseignements sont utilisés d'utilité opérationnelle pour l'institution qui en a le contrôle — quand le détail de conservation est éliminé — les documents de valeur archivistique sont transférés aux AN.

Accès à l'information

Chaque institution désigne un haut fonctionnaire chargé de la gestion des sondages de renseignements. Cetle per-
sonne représente le sous-chef suprême du SCT et d'autres organismes centraux qui s'occupent de la GRDG.

Les institutions sont responsables, par l'entremise des sous-chefs, du respect des politiques du CT sur l'information.

La politique régionale demande aux institutions fédérales d'organiser leur information en un ou plusieurs systèmes de classement à production structures qui peuvent servir pour la gestion des fonds de renseignements. Les institutions doivent gérer l'information contenue dans le rapport fait l'objet d'un calendrier de communication assurer que toute information est de disposition conservatoire.

Le Secrétaire du Conseil du Trésor (SCT) a publié en août 1989 sa Politique sur la gestion des renseignements détenus par les gouvernements (GRDG). L'un des ses principaux objectifs est d'identifier et de conserver les fonds de renseignements qui documentent les décisions relatives aux politiques et aux programmes ou qui ont « une importance historique ou archivistique ».

La GRDG et la nouvelle approche

Le troisième mode de disposition est l'aliénation. Le loueurement fédéral doit se débarrasser des documents qu'aurait des responsabilités sont transférées aux gouvernements provinciaux ou territoriaux, ou lorsqu'un organisme ou un programme passe au secteur privé.

Il y a aussi la destruction. Les documents papier deviennent inutiles et sont envoyés à l'usine de recyclage ou au dépotoir municipal, si les dommages des documents électroniques sont souvenus tout simplement effacés.

Disposition

Qui peut effectuer un transfert aux AN, à des fins de conservation, de documents de valeur archivistique ou historique. Environ cinq cent documents transférés aux AN.

Les AN utilisent, en anglais comme en français, le terme « dispositions » pour désigner les trois types de documents qui sont émis par l'Etat et qui sont destinés à réglementer les relations entre les citoyens et l'Etat.

* Aux termes de la loi de 1987, l'Archiviste fédéral se nomme maintenant l'Archiviste national et les Archives publiques du Canada, les Archives nationales du Canada.

Bien qu'une loi n'ait pas immédiatement vu le jour, on a donc adopté en 1966 le Décret sur les documents publics (C.P. 1966-17749) qui établissait les responsabilités des institutions fédérales, du CT et des archives publiques du Canada en matière de disposition. L'archiviste fédéral est alors devenu l'autorité suprême pour l'application des plans de conservation des documents. Ce pouvoir a augmenté avec l'adoption de la loi sur les archives nationales du Canada en 1987.

Nous recommandons que la responsabilité des documents publics et l'établissement de règles pour leur disposition soient régis par la loi.]

La Commission royale sur l'organisation du gouvernement (Glassco, 1962) a été un regard critique sur la grande qualité de documents produits par le gouvernement. Dans son rapport, la Commission a appuyé une conclusion du Comité des archives publiques :

Peu à peu, le Comité est parvenu à coordonner et à surveiller les méthodes et les règles de procédure alternatives à la disposition des documents publics. Alors qu'avant on détruire les documents devenus inutiles sur le plan opérationnel, on examinait maintenant à la loupe les demandes de disposition pour assurer la conservation des documents de valeur durable.

Un comité consultatif interministériel chargé des documents publics, créé en 1944 à la demande du premier ministre, a recommandé la création d'un comité permanent des documents publics, lequel devait être présidé par le secrétaire d'Etat, et l'Archiviste général en tant que vice-président.

documents, mais ne précisait pas du gouvernement ni la fâgeon de le faire. obligeation de sauvegarder la mémoire du cours de la Seconde Guerre mon- tiale, la protection de documents ouvernementaux a déclenché. A la fin de la guerre, on s'est proclamé à la fin de la destruction des produits par des organisations qui n'existaient plus.

entre-temps, la première loi sur les archives du Canada (1912) autorisait les archivistes fédéraux à acquérir des

des premières méthodes de conservation et de préservation de l'écologie plus que la théorie historique des documents.

Un peu d'histoire

■ Des documents ministériels formant une nouvelle catégorie de documents, touchent les tâches officielles du ministre en tant que chef d'une institution fédérale, mais ne sont pas placés dans la catégorie de l'institution. Ces documents ministériels du ministre assurent le transfert de ces documents aux AN. Au contraire, ils détiennent considérés comme des papiers personnels du ministre, qui choisissent de donner aux AN. Au contraire, ils en faire don ou non aux AN.

Le paragraphe 6(1) précise que les documents qui, selon l'Archiviste national, ont une valeur historique ou archivistique doivent être transférés aux institutions ou à d'autres organismes qui en sont responsables.

Les fondements législatifs



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Bulletin des documents gouvernementaux

Archives nationales du Canada

Dans ce numéro...

Le présent Bulletin a pour thème la disposition des documents. Tous ceux et celles qui s'efforcent de gérer l'information en tant qu'élément de gestion doivent se rappeler que l'information est un bien commun et qu'il faut la partager. La conservation des documents, à la fois pour la recherche et pour la gestion, est donc une obligation légale. Les documents doivent être conservés dans des conditions de sécurité et de disponibilité suffisantes pour assurer leur utilité future.

Une nouvelle approche à la disposition

Dans une lettre datée du 30 novembre 1990, l'Archiviste national, M. Wallot, a proposé aux sous-ministres des institutions fédérales de travailler avec eux à planifier la disposition de leurs documents systématique de leurs documents. Malgré la quantité de documents archivés dans les conserves, il existe encore des lacunes dans la mémoire du gouvernement, il faut également tenir compte des coûts d'entretien des documents sans valeur qui ne peuvent être détruits sans l'autorisation de l'Archiviste national.

M. Wallot a proposé d'échelonner la nouvelle approche sur cinq ans. Les archives nationales (AN) contracteront d'institutions fédérales et élaboreront avec chacune d'elles un plan de dis-

position des documents.